

Editorial

Traffic control-still a flop show

Time and again many newspaper published in the state has been highlighting the problems being faced by the people due to the unorganised manner of the traffic regulation in the city.

Change of government is not bringing any good when it comes to the traffic problem. Those assigned for control of the traffic are not doing their duty for reason best known to the authority. Zebra crossing are just for name sake - nor the traffic police guide the commuters to follow the rule neither the people driving vehicles shows respect to the zebra crossing or stoppage line.

Well, Imphal city in particular has been witnessing a phenomenal increase in the amount of vehicles- an indication of the rising social status of the public and improving economic conditions in the state. While these factors are a welcome sign, the fact remains that the concerned authorities have failed to keep pace with the times and the changing social scenario in the state resulting in heavy traffic jams and delays which needs to be addressed immediately. The short term policies and systems being implemented from time to time in an attempt to ease the congestions and traffic jams have not been able to alleviate the problem in any way, on the contrary these ad-hoc measures have managed to confuse the public and compound the problem the authorities have been trying to solve. The formation of Traffic regulation and parking committee has not been of much help, and one can only wonder if they are functioning at all. Queries put up to the concerned departments have only resulted in more bewildering responses- a classic example of the effectiveness of passing the buck around that has been at work in all government set ups. While formulation of policies and systems to control and regulate traffic may be a beginning in the right direction, the fact remains that the increasing number of vehicles need additional space to accommodate them and juggling acts of the traffic system by the experts, however efficient and experienced they may be, will not bear fruit. Construction of additional parking spaces at strategic locations, bypasses and flyovers, and most importantly providing subways at important and crowded junctions will go a long way in reducing these problems. Construction of public utilities does not automatically guarantee improvement- their proper usage is as important- an obvious example being the use of footpaths by the vendors and shopkeepers to stock and ply their goods forcing the pedestrians to walk on the road. The need to streamline and re-orient the traffic police personnel is also being felt by the public.

Turning a blind eye to the irregularities being committed by the drivers of various public and commercial transport vehicles in consideration for a "quick handshake" has been well documented- despite the dangers and inconveniences such greedy acts causes. The present government ministers and high ranking officials may not be feeling the burden such traffic jams causes as they seem to have a prerogative of the right of use of the road over the common public but unless some concrete steps are taken up very soon, the only option that would be available to them would be to use their feet with their retinue of escorts and assistants wading through the impossible traffic- surely a distracting relief for the stranded common public on the road.

Three killed in stampede at Bihar's Begusarai district

PTI Begusarai, Nov. 4: Three women were killed and several others injured in a stampede near Samariya Ghat on the banks of river Ganga in Bihar's Begusarai district around 7 am on Saturday, police said. Sadar Deputy Superintendent of Police Mithlesh Kumar said the incident occurred in a narrow lane next to the ghat, nearly 100 km from the state capital, where people had

gathered in large numbers on the occasion of Karthik Purnima. "We are trying to ascertain the cause behind the stampede," Mr. Kumar said, adding that the women's identities have not been ascertained yet. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has announced an ex-gratia of 1.4 lakh each for the families of the deceased and free treatment for those injured in the incident. -

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National & International News

74% of northeast monsoon rains in 8 days sink Chennai, kills 12

TNN Chennai, Nov. 3: Rain continued to come down in sheets till late Friday night in Chennai, taking the death toll from the northeast monsoon to 12 so far, and the city's total rainfall to close to three-fourths of the average for a season that has just got started. The city had by 8.30am on Friday - mostly from a mere eight days since the northeast monsoon set in on October 27 - already recorded 554.2mm of rainfall this year, or 74% of the long-term average of 750mm it receives annually in the rainy season, which the IMD calculates between October 1 and December 15.

Chennai had till Friday recorded 441.3mm of rainfall (58.84% of the seasonal average) from the northeast monsoon, Met office data showed. Thursday's rain was Chennai's third-highest in history in a single day for November, behind only 452.2mm in 1976 and 246.15mm in 2015. It continued on Friday evening after a brief break, leaving the city precariously placed. Several localities reported flooding, especially of interior roads, and the showers hit traffic for a second straight day. The Chennai district collector declared Saturday, a school holiday. Most districts have recorded more than average rainfall

for the season so far, the Met office said. Water levels in temple tanks started rising after monsoon struck Chennai and its neighbouring districts. A poor monsoon last year had left several temple tanks parched, and water in them has been met with enthusiasm among residents, as it also helps recharge groundwater levels. Meanwhile, facing public ire amidst heavy rains and inundation, the Edappadi K Palaniswami government went on the offensive on Friday, listing out various flood-prevention as well as rehabilitation measures undertaken by the government.

Leading the charge, CM Palaniswami, who visited Mudichur and Perungalathur along with his deputy O Panneerselvam, said: "We have seen Bengaluru and Mumbai getting inundated during rain. But due to the execution of the (disaster management) plan envisaged by Amma's government in 2015 on how to remove flood water from low-lying areas, there is not much water stagnation today. People are unaffected." A stretch of 300km, out of 386km-long drain network project, has been completed at a cost of Rs 1,100 crore in Chennai, as announced by Jayalalithaa during her tenure, Palaniswami said.

BJP raises drug abuse issue in HP polls, Cong terms it false

PTI Haroli (HP), Nov. 4: On a hazy afternoon, a group of curious school boys makes a brief halt at a poll rally of the ruling Congress in village Pandoga here as a local leader delivers a speech centred around the drug abuse issue. He accuses the BJP, accusing it of trying to defame Haroli constituency over abuse of "chitta" (drugs). He asks the people to counter the "BJP propaganda", saying no girl will marry youths from the area as they will think that they are drug addicts. As the speeches continue, Industries Minister in the Virbhadra Singh government Mukesh Agnihotri, who is seeking re-election from the constituency bordering Punjab for the fourth time, remains busy meeting his supporters before the chief minister's arrival at the

venue to address the rally. Agnihotri, who also holds the key portfolios of Information, Parliamentary Affairs and Labour, is up against BJP's Prof Ram Kumar, a former college lecturer whom he defeated in the 2012 polls by a margin of over 4,500 votes. The drug abuse problem is being raked up by BJP in poll rallies in Haroli, which falls in Una district. The party candidate has even put up posters and banners at many places in the constituency seeking people's support to make Haroli free from the menace of "drugs, mafia and goonda raj". Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is scheduled to address a poll rally near here tomorrow to bolster party's campaign for the November 9 election, had targeted the Congress government on drug, mining, tender, transfer and forest mafias allegedly thriving under the present regime.

However, Agnihotri claims it is a non-existent issue "being created by the opposition". "We are contesting on development and welfare agenda, but when the BJP realised they cannot counter us on this, they have started to create non-existent issues like drugs," he told PTI. Meanwhile, the school boys, who were keenly listening to the local Congress leader, got distracted when they see a box containing party's campaign material like caps and scarves. They fetch a few caps from the cardboard box and move on. Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh soon arrives to address the rally and is welcomed by Congress workers dancing to the beats of 'dhol'. The veteran leader focuses his speech on development issue and the works undertaken by his government.

Hitting out at the BJP which has been targeting him over corruption charges, the 83-year-old leader dubs it as political vendetta and says, "I haunt the BJP leaders in their dreams". "We will win with absolute majority," he says amid applause from the crowd. Agnihotri, who won for the first time way back in 2003, talks about the development works undertaken in his constituency including opening of three degree colleges, two ITIs, setting up of two industrial areas, a Rs 922-crore Swan river channelisation project, medium irrigation scheme and upcoming food park. "They (BJP) cannot counter us on development agenda, which is why they are running a negative campaign. They are building their campaign on lies, but they cannot be fool people who will bring back the Congress again," he says.

Bank manager arrested for allegedly raping Russian woman in Vrindavan

PTI Mathura, Nov. 3: The branch manager of a nationalised bank was arrested for allegedly raping a 20-year-old Russian woman repeatedly since she came to India in September after they forged a friendship on Facebook, a senior police officer said.

"The manager of UCO Bank's Vrindavan branch, Mahendra Prasad Singh, has been arrested based on a complaint filed by the woman," deputy superintendent of police Vijay Shanker Mishra said Friday. The woman has been sent for medical examination. In her complaint, the woman alleged

that the banker "threatened me with dire consequences" if she disclosed his act to anyone. According to the FIR, she came into contact with Singh through Facebook on November, 2016. They had frequent conversations afterwards. On his advice, she came to India on September 17 and stayed

in the temple town of Vrindavan, according to the FIR. She alleged that on September 22 she was taken to a house, where she was raped and that her ordeal continued since then. She said that the complaint was filed after she met another Russian woman who counselled her to do so.

Sushma Swaraj seeks report over attack on Sikh boy in US

New Delhi, Nov. 4: External affairs minister Sushma Swaraj said on Saturday she has sought a report from the Indian Embassy in the US following reports of an attack on a Sikh schoolboy in a city in Washington. "I have seen news reports about the beating of a Sikh boy in US. I have asked @IndianEmbassyUS to send me a report on the incident," Sushma Swaraj tweeted. The 14-year-old boy was beaten up by a classmate in Kent city, with his father claiming that the victim was targeted as he is of Indian descent, the media reported. The incident happened on October 26, less than a block from Kentridge High School, where both the boys are students, KIRO-TV reported.

but was instead a continuation of an earlier classroom dispute. The victim's parents denied that, saying their son did not even know his attacker's name. "He never interacted with this guy. He never knew his name," said the victim's father. Calls and messages from people in the region poured in expressing outrage about the incident. The Kent area is home to many Sikhs. The family said it wants peace for them and everyone. "I don't want to see this again happen with my son or anyone else. I don't want to see this," the boy's father said.

TV actress Shraddha Mangle and husband arrested for alleged money extortion from IAS officer

New Delhi, Nov. 4: Television actress Shraddha Mangle and her husband Satish, employed as a private detective, have been arrested by the Thane police for allegedly extorting a sum of Rs. 7 crores from an IAS officer, reports suggested. According to reports, Satish had demanded the sum in order to retract allegations of corruption against the suspended IAS officer Radheshyam Mopalwar. Thane Police Commissioner Param Bir was quoted as saying, "Private

detective Satish Mangle and his wife Shraddha were arrested by the officials of AEC from his rented flat in Dombivali yesterday. Police have recovered two laptops, five mobile handsets, four pen drives, 15 CDs and some incriminating documents from his (Mangle's) residence." "Initially, they had demanded Rs 10 cr but later settled for Rs 7 cr. Satish had even threatened Mopalwar and his daughter of consequences if the latter fail to make him the payment."

US strikes IS in Somalia for first time

AFP Washington, Nov 4: The US has conducted a pair of drone strikes against Islamic State fighters in Somalia, the first time America has hit the jihadists in the Horn of Africa nation, officials said. The strikes occurred in northeastern Somalia and killed "several terrorists," the US military's Africa Command said in a statement yesterday. According to Voice of America, which cited the chairman of the town of Qandala in the semi-autonomous region of Puntland, six missiles hit an IS base in Buqa village, 60 kilometres away. "Local residents and pastoralists were shocked and fled from the area," Jama Mohamed Qurshe

told VOA. AFRICOM spokesman Lieutenant Commander Anthony Falvo said no civilians were in the vicinity of the strikes. "They struck their intended targets," he told AFP, noting these were the first anti-IS air strikes in Somalia. The first strike occurred around midnight Somalia time (0300 GMT) with the second strike coming at about 11:00 am (1400 GMT). In recent months, the US has repeatedly hit Somali jihadists from the Shabaab rebel group that is aligned with Al-Qaeda, but yesterday's development marks a significant step in the ever-evolving war against IS.

"US forces will continue to use all authorised and appropriate measures to protect Americans and to disable terrorist threats," AFRICOM said. "IS claimed its first suicide attack in Somalia in May, killing at least five people as it stepped up activities in a region dominated by the Shabaab. The militants are led by former Shabaab cleric Abdiqadir Mumin, who switched allegiance from Al-Qaeda to IS in October 2015 and was named a "global terrorist" by the US State Department in August. Mumin was born in Puntland and lived in Sweden before moving to the UK in the 2000s, where he was granted British citizenship.